

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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S E C R E T USNATO 2223

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: MPOL, NATO
SUBJECT: IMPROVEMENT OF NATO DEFENSES IN NORTHAG

REF: STATE 082503 (DTG 130117Z APR 77)

SUMMARY: WE RECOGNIZE THAT THE NORTHAG IMPROVEMENT PACKAGE (REFTEL) ADDRESSES A WELL-ESTABLISHED KEY AREA OF DEFICIENCY IN NATO'S CONVENTIONAL FORCE POSTURE. FURTHER, WE BELIEVE THAT NORTHAG WEAKNESSES ARE A NATURAL AND IMPORTANT CANDIDATE FOR WHATEVER US INITIATIVES ARE DECIDED UPON FOR THE MAY DPC MINISTERIAL MEETING. BUT WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT WE CAN COMMENT KNOWLEDGEABLY ON PROBABLY ALLIED REACTION BEYOND THIS, EXCEPT FOR TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS, UNTIL WE CAN EXAMINE, AT LEAST IN GENERAL TERMS, THE RANGE AND EXTENT OF INITIATIVES THE US MAY WISH TO PROPOSE. WITH RESPECT TO TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS, WE BELIEVE THE US SHOULD: A) CAST US UNILATERAL MEASURES IN THE CONTEXT OF COLLECTIVE TASKS, TO HIGHLIGHT THE SECRET

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IMPORTANCE WE ATTACH TO COLLECTIVE ACTION; AND B) SUGGEST THAT MINISTERS GIVE AGREEMENT IN BROAD PRINCIPLE, AND DIRECT THE NMAS TO CONVERT GENERAL OBJECTIVES INTO MORE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS FOR MINISTERIAL ENDORSEMENT. END SUMMARY.

1. THE NORTHAG IMPROVEMENT PACKAGE (REFTEL) PROPOSES SOUND MEASURES TO REDRESS AN AREA OF WIDELY RECOGNIZED WEAKNESS IN NATO'S CONVENTIONAL FORCE POSTURE. THIS SUBJECT WOULD HAVE TO BE HIGH, WE BELIEVE, ON ANY

CANDIDATE LIST OF IMPROVEMENT IMPACT MEASURES TO BE PROPOSED AT THE MAY MEETING. FURTHER, WE WHOLEHEARTEDLY INDORSE THE INTENTION TO INDUCE ACTION RATHER THAN SIMPLY ANOTHER STUDY OF A WIDELY RECOGNIZED PROBLEM.

2. WHAT THE MAY MEETING CAN BEST ACCOMPLISH, WE BELIEVE, IS MINISTERIAL ENCOURAGEMENT FOR NMAS AND NATIONS TO GET ON WITH THE JOB OF CORRECTING KEY DEFICIENCIES WHICH ARE -- AS RETEL PROPERLY RECOGNIZES -- WITHIN THE ABILITY OF APPROPRIATE ALLIES TO CORRECT. IN THIS REGARD, WE WOULD STRESS, HOWEVER, THAT ACTUAL PROGRESS IN MAKING IMPROVEMENTS WILL BE MEASURED MORE IN TERMS OF BILATERAL EFFORTS THAN COMMITTEE ACTION AT NATO.

3. SINCE WE DO NOT YET KNOW THE SIZE AND SHAPE OF THE ENTIRE PACKAGE OF IMPACT MEASURES WHICH THE US MAY CHOOSE TO MAKE, AND SINCE WE REGARD THE QUESTION OF TOTAL COST AND DIFFICULTY AS PRIME IN ASSESSING WHETHER WE MAY BE ATTEMPTING TOO MUCH OR TOO LITTLE, WE RESTRICT OUR PRESENT COMMENT TO TACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS WHICH ARE RELEVANT, WE BELIEVE, TO WHATEVER MEASURES THE US MAY DECIDE TO SUGGEST.

4. TACTICALLY, WE RECOMMEND THAT SYG LUNS AND NEW
SECRET

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CMC ZEINER GUNDERSEN BE INFORMED OF THE GENERAL CONTENT OF OUR INITIATIVES IN ADVANCE OF THE MAY DPC MINISTERIAL MEETING. WE WOULD EXPECT BOTH TO APPLAUD THESE INITIATIVES AND TO RECOMMEND THAT THE NATO MILITARY AUTHORITIES UNDERTAKE TO CONVERT THEM INTO SPECIFIC ACTION PROPOSALS TO GIVE THEM NATO STATUS. SECRETARY BROWN MIGHT SUGGEST, AT THE MAY DPC, THAT THE NMAS DEVELOP SUCH COHERENT PACKAGES, AND SUBMIT THEM THROUGH PERMREPS TO MINISTERS FOR APPROVAL IN DECEMBER 1977, OR AT THE LATEST IN SPRING 1978. SUCH A SUGGESTION BY SECRETARY BROWN WOULD HELP TO PRECLUDE GENERALIZED (I.E. NON-SUBSTANTIVE) STATEMENTS OF SUPPORT FROM HIS MINISTERIAL COLLEAGUES, WHICH WOULD MERELY URGE "FURTHER STUDY" BY THE MILITARY AUTHORITIES (I.E., A "KISS OF DEATH"). SUCH A SUGGESTION BY THE SECRETARY WOULD ALSO SERVE TO ELICIT MINISTERIAL APPROVAL "IN PRINCIPLE", AND WOULD LESSEN THE TIME THAT WOULD OTHERWISE ELAPSE BEFORE MINISTERS WOULD BE CONFRONTED WITH THE NEED TO DECIDE ON A SPECIFIC SET OF ENDORSED PROPOSALS. IN ADDITION, WE SENSE THAT NMAS MAY BE IN THE BEST POSITION -- PRIMARILY BECAUSE WORK IS ALREADY IN PROGRESS, BUT IN VARYING STAGES, ON SO MANY CANDIDATE INITIATIVES -- TO JUDGE WHERE NATIONAL

SENSITIVITIES ARE LEAST AND GREATEST AND TO
ACCOMMODATE THESE BY APPROPRIATELY SPECIFIC OR GENERAL
ACTION PROPOSALS, AS APPROPRIATE.

5. WE BELIEVE THAT, IN ORDER TO PLACE FORCE IMPROVE-
MENT PACKAGES SQUARELY WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF THE
VICE-PRESIDENT'S JANUARY REMARKS, SECRETARY BROWN
SHOULD HIGHLIGHT THE NEED FOR INCREASED ALLIED
INVESTMENT TO CORRESPOND TO INCREASED US INVESTMENT.
IF THIS IS NOT DONE, THE ALLIES ARE LIKELY TO
SEE OUR "IMPACT MEASURES" AS NO-COST/LOW-COST
GIMMICKS, TO WHICH THEY CAN SUBSCRIBE WITHOUT REAL
SECRET

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MEANING. F SECRETARY BROWN STATES ORDER-
OF-MAGNITUDE COSTS FOR THE US MEASURES HE HAS IN
MIND, THE ALLIES WILL GET THE MESSAGE.
STRAUSZ-HUPE

SECRET

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